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First Committee
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Friday, 29 October 1999, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. González ..... (Chile)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Miranda (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Following the end of the cold war, new risks and actors emerged on the international scene, diversifying the threats to international security. The reform process of the United Nations consequently needs to take on a new dimension, whereby the United Nations and its agencies reassess their capacity to respond effectively to the demands and needs of Member States, including in a fundamental role: that of prevention.

Closer cooperation between the United Nations and the Member States is undoubtedly becoming increasingly important. Despite the efforts made to date, disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons continue to be priority objectives that need to be more vigorously addressed. Similarly, we must forge ahead in the adoption and consolidation of measures geared to ensuring that the development, production and use of other weapons of mass destruction are prohibited. At the same time, the international community must continue its efforts to ensure limits and effective controls on conventional weapons.

Current events in the area of regional and global security demonstrate that we need to strengthen the machinery of the United Nations through a renewed, revitalized and interconnected approach to peace, disarmament and development. The multilateral nature of the United Nations is the best guarantee that there will be no hegemonies. The activities carried out by the United Nations at the regional level are very important in increasing the stability and security of the Member States.

The Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean can contribute significantly to achieving understanding and cooperation among the States of the region, particularly in the fields of peace, disarmament and development.

Effective implementation of the guidelines of the world Organization requires the participation of States and adequate understanding by governmental and international agencies. We therefore need a regional entity that can serve as a nexus for operational interaction among those actors, but especially between the United Nations and the region.

At the level of Latin America and the Caribbean, the regional atmosphere is conducive to developing debate, promoting discussion and generating consensus. Nevertheless, there are problems that require better interaction among actors — civil and military, governmental and non-governmental, national and international — in a forum for achieving non-binding objectives.

The United Nations Regional Centre for peace, disarmament and development are no longer mere remnants of the cold war in playing their role, but rather real actors in the United Nations system, adapting their work to modern demands and actively promoting academic and governmental interaction through the exchange of

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information and the dissemination of international agreements, thereby contributing to the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of peace, disarmament and development in general. The Centre can serve as a forum for reflecting on, disseminating and exchanging positions and experiences and as an entity that will make it possible to renew dialogue and promote consensus, closely analysing regional realities in order to develop more effective measures and thus, through discussion of visions, situations, projects and practical developments, stimulate the search for sustainable peace and development.

In order to obtain positive results, the centres must implement programmes of dissemination and education with the aim of promoting regional peace and security in a way that will contribute to fulfilment of the purposes and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations.

We are convinced that the Regional Centre should have the resources it needs to become a creative, modern, efficient and effective institution able to encourage a climate favourable to the promotion of universal efforts in the sphere of disarmament. We therefore wish to highlight the importance and relevance of the Regional Centre as a means of promoting close regional relations. The Regional Centre can act as a catalyst for projects and human and material resources in order to optimize efforts, develop and strengthen cooperation in the region and establish new forms of cooperation with other regions.

In this context, I have the honour to submit, on behalf of the Group of States of Latin America and the Caribbean, the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/54/L.51, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean".

The Regional Centre was created in 1986, pursuant to resolution 41/60 J of 3 December 1986. Headquartered in the city of Lima, Peru, the Centre was established on 1 January 1987 with the purpose of providing "substantive support for the initiatives and other activities of the Member States of the Latin American region for the implementation of measures for peace and disarmament, and for the promotion of economic and social development". *(resolution 41/60 J, para. 2)*

Later, in July 1996, the Regional Centre temporarily suspended its work. On the basis of resolution 52/220 of 1997, the General Assembly decided to maintain and revitalize the regional centres of the United Nations. In 1998, the Secretary-General appointed the Director of the Regional Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr. Pericles Gasparini, thereby reviving the Centre's activities.

The draft resolution being put forward today is intended to reiterate the importance of the role the Centre can fulfil in promoting United Nations activities at the regional level in order to strengthen peace, stability, security and development among its Member States. The draft resolution expresses satisfaction with the reinitiation of the activities of the Regional Centre, as provided for in the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/310), including the successful international workshop entitled "Illicit trafficking in small arms: Latin American and Caribbean issues", held in Lima in June 1999.

The draft resolution also expresses appreciation for the political support and financial contributions that have been received and urges all States, as well as international governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations, to make voluntary contributions to strengthen the Centre's programme of activities and their implementation.

Finally, it requests the Secretary-General to provide the Centre with all necessary support so that it may carry out its programme of activities and to report to the General Assembly next year on the implementation of this mandate.

We hope that draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.51, supported by all the States of Latin America and the Caribbean, will receive the broadest possible support from the First Committee so that it can be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Coutts (Chile) *(spoke in Spanish)*: It is a source of great satisfaction to Chile to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.51, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean". My country has always been aware of the need to provide the resources and mechanisms needed for the Centre to undertake its work without delay. Based on a conviction that has been expressed in deeds — that solutions to conflicts must be sought in absolute respect for international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, which has been and continues to be a main point of reference for our resolute efforts in this area — we are happy to see that we have met with success in our efforts to revitalize the Centre. In order to emphasize our active political support, we have decided to make a substantial financial contribution to the Centre.

We fully agree with the delegation of Peru that the Centre should actively promote academic and governmental interaction through the exchange of information, the generation of various currents of opinion, the strengthening of international agreements and the prevention of conflict.

Undoubtedly, in general terms, there is a vacuum, or at least a harmful lack, of knowledge about the conceptual elements that contribute to the legal content of the international system. Within that framework, greater familiarity with international law, as well as relevant discussions and evaluations of that law based on the achievement of political and diplomatic objectives, could have a positive and concrete impact on the establishment of peace and world stability.

The work of the Centre to that fundamental end should focus on the key tasks of elaborating and disseminating norms that will make possible a world characterized by certainties rather than risks, which have taken on new dimensions as regards both form and substance.

In this connection, we cannot disregard the fact that, as human beings should be the focus of our attention, the work carried out in the Lima Centre should thus also consider issues that threaten the dignity of people. In other words, we must make a serious and sustained effort to promote a climate that is increasingly conducive to lasting peace and security and that will extend to both present and future generations.

We therefore believe it would be both useful and desirable to define preventive strategies as well as strategies for preventive disarmament, in order to convey to Governments guidelines that would more effectively mitigate the conflict, tension, suspicion and resentment that still characterize international relations.

From the academic point of view, we should therefore promote greater awareness of the principles that inspire international humanitarian law — for example, in order to preserve values that are essential for the survival of our countries. Bearing in mind that this Centre is part of the United Nations system, since it was created by a resolution of the Organization, we believe the United Nations should devote particular attention to preparations for the convening as soon as possible of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We should also consider the proposals for a "new agenda" as one of the items on its agenda, bearing in mind that the mere possession of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to international peace and security and a possible violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter.

At the same time, we believe that the time has come to give content and substance to all issues related to disarmament and development and to undertake a practical study on the subject of peace dividends.

We believe that our region is well qualified to request that the rest of the international community respond to the concerns we have expressed on this matter. Latin America is today a nuclear-free zone of peace, free of all types of weapons of mass destruction. We therefore urge with great firmness, coupled with the appropriate restraint, that this type of initiative be translated into real action and receive a positive response from Governments.

Finally, we should like to state that we are fully prepared to carry out an in-depth discussion of these matters, so that this presentation will not represent a merely rhetorical statement.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation has the honour to introduce to the Committee the draft resolution in document A/C.1/54/L.43*, dated 27 October 1999, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*". We are pleased to announce that this draft resolution is being sponsored by the following delegations: Algeria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jamaica, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, the Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Samoa, San Marino, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe. The Islamic Republic of Iran and Sierra Leone have also become sponsors of the draft resolution. My delegation wishes to express its sincere appreciation to all these sponsors.

The draft resolution is basically similar to the one presented last year, with minor amendments of a technical nature. Its 14 preambular and four operative paragraphs are virtually identical with resolution 53/77 W of 4 December 1998. For the sake of brevity, I will focus only on its operative paragraphs.

Operative paragraph 1 once again underlines the unanimous conclusion of the advisory opinion of the

International Court of Justice that "there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

Operative paragraph 2 calls once again upon all States immediately to fulfil that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations in the year 2000 leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination.

Operative paragraph 3 requests all States to inform the Secretary-General of the efforts and measures they have taken on the implementation of the present resolution and nuclear disarmament, and requests the Secretary-General to apprise the General Assembly of that information at its fifty-fifth session.

Operative paragraph 4 decides to include the issue in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session.

It is clear from the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that States have a legal obligation not only to pursue such negotiations but also to bring them to an early conclusion. This is consistent with the solemn obligation made by States Parties under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament and to pursue determinedly systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of the elimination of those weapons. The sponsors of the draft resolution consider this unanimous opinion of the World Court on the existence of that obligation to constitute a clear basis for follow-up actions by Member States of the United Nations in their determined efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

In submitting this draft resolution, allow me to reiterate some points I mentioned last year in response to comments made by a few delegations that spoke against the initiation of last year's resolution, and that may do so again this year, as well as to raise a few additional points.

It has been alleged that the draft resolution's call for multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention is unrealistic and lacks credibility. Let me clarify: the draft resolution calls on States to commence multilateral negotiations leading to — I repeat, leading to — an early conclusion of a convention; it does not talk in terms of commencing immediate negotiations on a convention. It thereby allows for precisely the kinds of disarmament measures that the nuclear-weapon States themselves are committed to support. Therefore, the approach called for by the draft resolution is not unrealistic; it is in fact compatible with the incremental approaches mooted by others.

We are aware that negotiations on disarmament need to move forward in a progressive fashion. We commend the approaches taken by some countries towards this end outside of the Conference on Disarmament, either through bilateral agreements or arrangements or through unilateral decisions. However, we cannot but express disappointment at the lack of progress in these endeavours: six years after its signing, the START II has yet to be put into effect owing to its non-ratification, while decisions by some States not to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and its non-ratification thus far by three major nuclear-weapon States, have prevented its entry into force.

While my delegation recognizes the importance and continuing relevance of bilateral negotiations and unilateral decisions, these should not detract from the importance of multilateral negotiations. Indeed, the two tracks could complement and reinforce each other; nuclear disarmament is a matter of concern to all humanity, not just to nuclear-weapon States.

Concerning the draft resolution's "selective quotation" from the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion, my delegation readily admits that the draft resolution focuses on the unanimous opinion as regards the existence of an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control. It does so in order not to confuse the two main conclusions — that is, the threat and use of nuclear weapons and the obligation to negotiate disarmament — as these require different responses.

The draft resolution, as reflected in operative paragraph 1, focuses on the disarmament obligations of States, as this was a conclusion arrived at unanimously by the International Court of Justice. Its implementation is entirely appropriate for the General Assembly, which has a mandate to promote disarmament negotiations. The sponsors of the draft resolution recognize the value of the Court's decision as a whole. The draft resolution does not pretend that operative paragraph 1 is the only conclusion of the Court that could have an influence on disarmament policy or that there are no other actions which could be taken in the light of the Court's decisions.

In fact, operative paragraph 3 encompasses the Court's decision as a whole, requesting States to inform the Secretary-General of the efforts and measures they have taken to fulfil their duties as underlined by the conclusions of the Court.

The contention that the draft resolution relieves non-nuclear-weapon States of any disarmament responsibility does not hold water. It calls upon all States to fulfil the obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament; it does not single out nuclear-weapon States only. A further contention was that the draft resolution removed the obligation under article VI of the NPT in relation to general and complete disarmament. The Court, in arriving at its conclusion, relied on international law, of which the NPT obligation contained in article VI is part, as well as other disarmament and customary law. The Court's conclusion that there is an obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament made no linkage between such an obligation and general and complete disarmament. Neither does the NPT make a direct link; it merely states that there is an obligation to do both.

The Court, in arriving at its unanimous decision that Member States have an obligation not only to conduct but also successfully to conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament, reiterates the obligation of States parties to the NPT. The unanimous decision of the International Court of Justice, representing the full weight of the legal opinion of all members of the World Court, is an important contribution to the development of international law which should not be summarily dismissed.

The fact that nuclear-weapon States have ignored this unanimous opinion and failed to pursue multilateral negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament can only have a negative impact on the NPT Review Conference and the nuclear disarmament process in general. If the situation persists, Member States of this Organization, in their desire to see full compliance with the provisions of the NPT, may wish to seek a further opinion from the World Court in relation to the non-observance in good faith by the nuclear-weapon States of their obligations pursuant to article VI.

As regards the draft resolution's silence on the Court's conclusion that there was not, in international law, a prohibition against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, one delegation made the point last year, which my delegation would like to reiterate, that the Court did conclude that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was generally illegal and that it is incorrect to say that it allowed for an exception. The Court rejected the argument that there would be legal uses of nuclear weapons and said that it could reach no definitive position regarding extreme circumstances. Further, it stated that "States must never make civilians the object of attack and must consequently never use weapons that are incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets." (*A/51/218, annex, para. 78*)

In submitting the draft resolution for consideration by this Committee, my delegation is confident that it will continue to receive the support of a large majority of Member States. We are confident that States which support multilateral negotiations that will eventually lead to the global elimination of nuclear weapons, to which we are all committed, will have no valid reason to oppose this draft resolution, which seeks to do exactly that in the long term. Once again, in introducing this draft resolution my delegation expresses its sincere appreciation to the sponsors, as well as to the delegations that will vote in its favour.

Mr. Moura (Brazil): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.34, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", on behalf of the following sponsors: Angola, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Namibia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, the Sudan, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam and Zambia.

This is the fourth consecutive year that Brazil has presented a draft resolution on this important matter. We are glad that this initiative won increased support last year, when resolution 53/77 Q was adopted with 154 votes in favour. It is our hope that the draft resolution this year may enjoy even broader support.

I would remind this Committee that last year's resolution took into account questions relating to rights of

navigation through maritime space. The draft resolution before us is almost identical to last year's. The only addition is the introduction, as a second preambular paragraph, of a reference to the text entitled "Establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned", adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission last May.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, one of the most significant developments of recent decades is that the nuclear option has already been ruled out in several parts of the world.

The areas of application of the regional treaties, plus the Antarctic Treaty, contribute to freeing from nuclear weapons the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas north of the Equator where these treaties apply. The States parties to those treaties, in close consultation with their neighbours, have renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons and accepted stringent verification commitments to that effect.

Our initiative aims to achieve recognition by the General Assembly, for the fourth consecutive year, of the progressive emergence of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. Such recognition should be considered a confirmation of the commitments of the international community towards non-proliferation and disarmament.

This draft resolution does not create new legal obligations. It does not contradict any norms of international law applicable to ocean space, such as those contained in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It aims to recall the need to respect existing commitments under nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties and their protocols, to call upon States that have not yet done so to move towards ratification of such treaties and protocols and to call upon all States to consider further proposals for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

We are convinced that the promotion of the idea that most of the globe become nuclear-weapon-free provides further impetus to the process of nuclear disarmament and to the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We wish, finally, to put on record our appreciation to all those who voted in favour of resolution 53/77 Q last year. We expect to continue deserving their support. The number of positive votes has grown since this initiative was first launched in 1995. On behalf of all its sponsors, I express our sincere hope that all States that support nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament will vote in favour of this draft resolution.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/54/L.41, entitled "Nuclear disarmament", on behalf of the following sponsors: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Colombia, the Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Niger, Nigeria, Panama, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Singapore, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Swaziland, Thailand, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Zambia and my own delegation.

This is our traditional draft resolution, which we first submitted at the Golden Jubilee session of the General Assembly, in 1995. This year marks the fifth year we are presenting such a draft resolution.

Right from the beginning, our draft resolution has reflected the majority views of the non-aligned countries, which form nearly two thirds of the membership of the United Nations. It enjoys their overwhelming support, and it also has a large number of sponsors from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). It is not a formal NAM draft resolution, however.

It is significant that this year the 10 countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have taken the lead in submitting this draft resolution, which has given it added impetus. Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41 has therefore emerged as the draft resolution of the ASEAN 10 and a large number of NAM countries, reflecting the majority views of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The substance of our draft resolution this year has a further significant aspect. The development of our text has been an evolutionary process. Taking into account suggestions and advice from its sponsors, we have made our draft resolution more flexible and realistic by dropping some rigid elements from its operative paragraphs. A/C.1/54/L.41 now projects a realistic vision of nuclear disarmament.

In its operative paragraphs the draft resolution, *inter alia*, urges the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately

the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems; also urges the nuclear-weapon States, as an interim measure, to de-alert and de-activate their nuclear weapons immediately; calls for the conclusion, as a first step, of a universal and legally binding multilateral agreement committing States to the process of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons; calls upon the nuclear-weapon States, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to agree on an internationally and legally binding instrument of the joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; calls upon all States to conclude an internationally and legally binding instrument on security assurances of non-use and non-threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States; urges the nuclear-weapon States to commence plurilateral negotiations among themselves at an appropriate stage on further deep reductions of nuclear weapons as an effective measure of nuclear disarmament; welcomes the establishment in the Conference on Disarmament in 1998 of the Ad Hoc Committee on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices; urges a speedy conclusion of a universal and non-discriminatory convention thereon; and reiterates its call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish, on a priority basis, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, to commence negotiations early in 2000 on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In short, the main thrust of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41 is the proposal for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons with a view to establishing a nuclear-weapon-free world. It also contains proposals for systematic and step-by-step practical nuclear disarmament measures, as I have outlined above.

Since the advent of our draft resolution on nuclear disarmament in the General Assembly in 1995, there has been a significant groundswell of international support for nuclear disarmament. Now, the central theme of discussions in international forums — be it the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament or the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conferences and Preparatory Committee meetings — is the question of nuclear disarmament. International clamour for effective measures of nuclear disarmament is broadly based and growing in strength. This involves not only States but also non-governmental organizations and individual groups.

The advisory opinion of 8 July 1996 of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* was a welcome development. The report of the Canberra Commission in 1996 has made valuable contributions to international efforts for nuclear disarmament. So has the Report of the Tokyo Forum this year. These international efforts towards nuclear disarmament are gaining momentum. Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41 has a part to play in those efforts, providing them an impetus in its own humble way.

For these reasons, I should like to request the member States of this Committee to accord overwhelming support to draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I wish to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.41, introduced a few moments ago by the Ambassador of Myanmar. Before proceeding, however, I should like to take this opportunity to complement you, Mr. Chairman, and your Bureau on your stewardship of this Committee to date and to assure you of my delegation's continued support.

With reference to the draft resolution at hand, I am pleased to be able to say that Bangladesh endorses its content, for a variety of reasons. My country has impeccable non-proliferation credentials. We are party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Comprehensive disarmament is a goal that is incorporated in our Constitution. In order to further stability in the region and in the world, we have consistently urged restraint and calm in the nuclear arena. We believe this draft resolution contains elements and aspirations that will help us achieve our aims.

Nuclear weapons remain the principal threat to humankind. Their elimination must therefore quite rationally form an essential feature of our future endeavours. While for us this constitutes the main plank of the Group of 21's thinking, there is a modicum of intellectual empathy from other groups towards this idea.

The problem in this, as in most negotiations, is to find common ground in the approach to what is common goal. We ourselves believe that the best methodology would be the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament. As pragmatists, we are of course prepared to continue to discuss the subject in order to arrive at the desired consensus, which would accommodate

the perceived national self-interest of the broadest range of Member States.

Pragmatism also dictates that the nuclear haves must behave in consonance with the dictum that example is better than precept. Simply to seek to chide or reprimand those that follow suit is not to speak from high moral ground. Anything that can remotely be vulnerable to the accusation of technological imperialism is best avoided. Those who totally ignored the criticism of discrimination in relation to the NPT obviously did so, as is now evident, at some peril to its cause.

Our purposes can be achieved only if we are able to work together in a spirit of harmony and cooperation. Bangladesh believes the draft resolution charts our future path in a balanced and rational manner. We would commend it to the Committee for the widest possible measure of support.

Mr. Marsono (Indonesia): On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, I would like to take this opportunity to express our support for the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament", contained in A/C.1/54/L.41, submitted by Myanmar and sponsored and supported by a vast number of other Member States.

This once again reaffirms Indonesia's long-standing commitment to the cause of global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament and reflects the determined will of a majority of the international community in their quest for a world without the menace posed by nuclear weapons.

The Indonesian delegation also wishes to concur with the position of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which has reaffirmed the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament. Furthermore, in concordance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, there exists an obligation for the international community to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

In this regard, Indonesia would like to call for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to commence negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time-frame. With the new millennium fast approaching, support for this draft resolution will be another welcome measure to invigorate the resolve of the international community in the relentless pursuit of achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Santos (Mozambique): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) member States of Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe and my own country, Mozambique. On behalf of SADC and on my own behalf, I should like to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee and on the excellent manner in which you, along with the other members of the Bureau, are conducting the affairs of the Committee. Allow me to pay a special tribute to your predecessor, Mr. André Mernier of Belgium, for the excellent work he did last year as Chairman. His guidance and wisdom remain in our memories.

The general debate on disarmament issues last week singled out individual items within the broad scope of the subject. Therefore, on behalf of SADC, I would like to take this opportunity to underscore the issue of conventional arms, particularly in the categories of small arms, light weapons and anti-personnel mines.

The SADC countries are concerned at the use of small arms, which results in human tragedy and violent conflicts all over the world, particularly in Africa. Within our region, unimpeded access to and use of light weapons and small arms have increased the lethality of crime, violence, banditry and civil disobedience. The demobilization of ex-combatants and the implementation of disarmament programmes are constrained by the widespread existence of poorly regulated and indiscriminately used light weapons and small arms.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion is a product of both past and current demand for arms intended for political, security or criminal purposes. Hence, strategies for control and reduction must necessarily be multifaceted. They must both reduce local demand and strengthen controls over existing legal and illegal stocks in the subregion, as well as preventing new illicit inflows.

The diffusion of existing stocks and the import of new weapons endanger the democratic activities which are being consolidated in the region and negatively affect the ability of Governments to govern. Thus far, various initiatives have been taken in the region. Joint police operations

between Mozambique and South Africa, known as Operation Rachel, started in 1995 and by 1998 had destroyed more than 450 tons of arms and ammunition, including a substantial amount of unexploded ordnance. Further operations will be necessary in the future, as a substantial number of caches have already been located.

In addition to the bilateral measures cited above, the nineteenth session of the SADC Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC), held in Lusaka in November 1997, established an ad hoc committee on cross-border crime, under the chairmanship of Zimbabwe. That committee was mandated to recommend ways and means by which loopholes in SADC States' border control mechanisms could be plugged to control the growing illicit trade in small arms and other crimes of a transnational nature, including, *inter alia*, car smuggling, drug trafficking and money laundering.

Furthermore, regional arrangements for combating illicit arms trafficking and other related crimes have also been put in place. This includes national agreements for cooperation and law enforcement, which culminated in the creation in 1995 of the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO). The objective of SARPCCO is to promote and engage in regional cooperation for the management of all forms of cross border and related crimes. These include, among other things, dissemination of information between member States, review of joint crime management strategies, formulation of regional police training policies and strategies and planning and undertaking joint operations.

In 1998, SADC, in cooperation with the European Union (EU), also elaborated an action programme on light weapons and illicit arms trafficking. The first steps for the implementation of this action programme are well advanced. Indeed, the Council of Ministers, meeting during the last SADC annual Summit, decided, *inter alia*,,to create a working group whose task will be to work out a regional policy on small arms to make possible the implementation of regional programmes.

SADC welcomes the decision of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on small arms adopted at the Algiers summit. It also welcomes the second workshop on illicit trafficking of small arms in Togo, hosted by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament, as well as Kenya's intention to host a regional meeting on small arms.

The establishment of a preparatory committee for the international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects, to be held not later then 2001, which will draw its mandate from the draft resolution to be adopted during the current session of the General Assembly, will have a lot of work to do to facilitate deliberations at the conference.

It is very important that all Members of the United Nations, particularly those Members affected by the problem of small arms, participate both in the preparatory committee and the conference. It is also our view that the chairmanship of the preparatory committee should be held by one of the most affected States.

Another issue of great concern to SADC member States, and I believe to all of us here in this Committee, is the issue of anti-personnel mines. Because SADC accords high priority to dealing with the scourge of anti-personnel mines, the Community has established a Mine Action Committee to coordinate mine action in the region, as well as the steps towards implementation and compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

The commitment by the international community to put an end to the scourge of landmines, contained in the Maputo Declaration, is of paramount importance. Let us enhance our efforts to sustain the momentum, especially because the most difficult phase of the whole process — that of implementation - still lies ahead. In other words, consolidation of the progress made so far and achievement of the ambitious and well-intentioned goal of completely eliminating landmines can be realized only if the Convention becomes universal.

To achieve these goals, the Southern African Development Community believes that States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, as well as the international community as a whole, should maintain the current momentum of the process by calling upon the Second Meeting of State Parties to the Convention, to be held next year, to consider practical issues relating to the implementation of the Convention; should provide complete and timely information, as required in article 7 of the Convention, in order to promote transparency and compliance with the Convention; and should support and advance the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of landmine victims in the countries in need.

Before concluding, I should like on behalf of the Government of Mozambique once again to express our most sincere appreciation to all States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel mines and on Their Destruction for making the First Meeting of States Parties, held last May in Maputo, a starting point towards the total elimination of landmines. As President Chissano underlined, "Four years for doing away with the stockpiles of anti-personnel mines in our countries and 10 years for completing the demining process [are] targets that cannot be negotiated for all the States parties to the Convention. What is negotiable, though, is the ways and means for their implementation".

Finally, I should like to emphasize that national, regional and international efforts aimed at curbing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the prohibition of the use, stockpiling and trafficking of land mines can be successful only with international assistance and cooperation. Therefore, SADC would like to appeal to the international community to spare no effort in providing the required assistance to all countries, especially those in need. On our part, we shall remain committed to and engaged in the goals and objectives collectively established.

Ms. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) *(spoke in Spanish)*: It is an honour for the Mexican delegation to present this statement on behalf of the member States of the Rio Group on the subject of small arms.

It has been stated that one of the consequences of the end of the cold war has been the recycling of enormous amounts of small arms and light weapons. Massive flows of such arms have exacerbated internal conflicts and increased crime and its dangers, particularly as regards organized crime. We have also been able to detect an increase in the illegal production of such weapons for delivery to many users.

Our region has become aware of the urgent need to block, combat and eliminate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives and other related material owing to the harmful effects of these activities on the security of individual States and the region as a whole; they endanger the well-being of our peoples, their social and economic development and their right to live in peace.

The progress we have made thus far has been recognized at the international level. The Declaration on the collection of illicit arms in the hands of Central American civilians, adopted by the countries of the Central American isthmus in January 1997, the Bridgetown Declaration of Principles, signed in May 1997 by the leaders of the Caribbean, and the entry into force in July 1998 of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials have laid the bases for confronting this problem from two perspectives: that of combating crime and that of preventing and reducing excessive and destabilizing accumulations of small arms and light weapons.

We are convinced that regional efforts are not sufficient in this field, which requires international cooperation with full respect for the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention and the juridical equality of States.

We agree with the view of the Security Council, which highlighted that the prevention of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a priority for the international community and accorded great importance to cooperation in dealing with the issue.

We consider that the United Nations must strengthen its activities in this area, particularly in the framework of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA), as the focal point to coordinate all actions of the United Nations system in the area of small arms and light weapons in all their aspects.

In this respect, we express our deepest appreciation to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for organizing, together with the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, the international workshop entitled "Illicit trafficking in small arms", held in June of this year in Lima, Peru, which gave special attention to the problems in our region.

The members of the Rio Group support holding an international conference on illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the year 2001. This will provide the international community with the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to combating the illegal manufacture of and trafficking in this type of arms and to preventing and reducing excessive, destabilizing stockpiling of these weapons.

We believe that the preparatory process will ensure the success of the conference. We therefore believe that the preparatory committee should examine topics related to procedure and should prepare a draft programme of action

containing measures for the Member States of the United Nations, as well as actions to be carried out at the regional and international levels and measures that should be implemented by the United Nations.

The recommendations of the Group of Experts on Small Arms should be taken into account in preparing that programme of action, since they contain new proposals in this field. Both the conference and the preparatory committee should meet in a place that will allow for ample participation by Member States, because the problem of small arms and light weapons has a global dimension.

Mr. Kambire (Burkina Faso) *(spoke in French)*: On behalf of the African Group, I have the honour to introduce three draft resolutions, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa" (A/C.1/53/L.10), "The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba)" (A/C.1/54/L.17) and "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes" (A/C.1/54/L.6).

The first draft resolution, "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa", does not differ essentially from the text of resolution 53/78 C, adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 1998. The only changes that have been made derive from the decision adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its thirty-fifth session, held in Algiers from 12-14 July 1999.

Thus, operative paragraph 3 appeals to all States, as well as to the international community, to make voluntary financial contributions in order to enable the Regional Centre to fulfil its mandate to the fullest possible extent and to carry out smoothly its activities. In that framework, I should like to welcome the decision of the Secretary-General, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/220, to appoint Mr. Ivor Richard Fung, a national of Cameroon, as Director of the Centre; he is carrying out his duties very effectively.

The second draft resolution is entitled "The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba)". The text is identical to the one adopted at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly in resolution 52/46 of 9 December 1997.

A small number of changes have been introduced in operative paragraphs 4 and 5. Paragraph 4 calls upon the African States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that have not yet done so to conclude comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) pursuant to the Treaty, thereby satisfying the requirements of article 9 (b) and annex II to the Treaty of Pelindaba when it enters into force. Those States are also invited to conclude additional protocols to their safeguards agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol approved by the IAEA Board of Governors on 15 May 1997.

Operative paragraph 5 expresses gratitude to the United Nations Secretary-General, the Secretary-General of the OAU and the Director General of the IAEA for the diligence with which they have rendered effective assistance to the signatories of the Treaty since 11 April 1996.

Turning to the third draft resolution, entitled "Prohibition of the dumping of radioactive wastes", the only new factor is the wish expressed that this text be examined every other year.

However, it is desirable that the General Assembly call upon all States to take the necessary measures to prevent the dumping of nuclear wastes that would adversely affect national security. Furthermore, the draft resolution takes note of resolution CM/Res. 1356 (LIV), adopted in 1991 by the Council of Ministers of the OAU, on the Bamako Convention on the Ban on the Import of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and on the Control of their Transboundary Movements within Africa.

The three draft resolutions that I have introduced have been the subject of broad agreement. African States are convinced that they will enjoy wide support and will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Amehou (Benin) *(spoke in French)*: My delegation would once again like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to say that we greatly appreciate the manner in which you have directed our discussions.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to share with all those in this Committee its viewpoints and concerns on the subject of small arms and light weapons and illicit trafficking in these items. Since the end of the cold war, the world has been witnessing a new type of conflict, for which third world countries are generally the theatre. I am referring to conflicts within States — in which armed groups, such as rebels or separatists, fight each other or fight against established powers — which are to some extent replacing conflicts among States.

Most of these conflicts result from underdevelopment that engenders poverty, which causes yesterday's brothers, neighbours and ethnic groups, who had always lived in peace, to turn against one another. Frictions among these various entities that could in the past have been settled with a minimum of conflict have since the beginning of the 1990s, unfortunately, found circumstances propitious to their development.

Indeed, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has in recent years grown exponentially. These small arms have undergone continuous technical improvements, making them easier to use. Yet even though they are light, small arms are nevertheless lethal and devastating.

These weapons have caused unimaginable ravages in the countries of Africa, and in my own subregion of West Africa in particular. Armed groups have challenged democratically elected regimes and have overcome them through the force of arms, and non-combatant civilian populations have been pillaged and decimated. Illicit trafficking in these weapons has promoted the emergence of groups of bandits and outlaws, which spread fear and desolation in towns and villages.

Mr. Seibert (Germany), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

Entire districts are criss-crossed by such armed groups at night, while public authorities remain powerless to act because they generally have less firepower than do these armed groups. Despite the actions that Governments have taken, they cannot control the circulation of these weapons with which their producers and traffickers are flooding our countries, whose borders are, unfortunately, still porous.

Organized and armed bands rob and kill travellers in inter-urban buses by day and by night. How can we imagine that development could take place in a country whose inhabitants, fearing to fall into the hands of bandits, can no longer tend to their affairs, trade or go out to work in the fields? The ease with which these weapons can be used also means that armed groups may recruit children, whom they then teach to use these engines of death.

As the Committee can see, illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons has in my subregion become a phenomenon of great importance with very negative repercussions on society and development. That is why my Government greatly appreciates the importance the international community has for some time attached to small arms and light weapons, even though nuclear weapons still remain the main issue haunting humanity.

I should therefore like to convey my Government's great appreciation to those delegations whose Governments have been unsparing in their efforts to wage a merciless war against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The Government of my country played a very active role in the work of the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) in order to bring about the Moratorium on the Import, Export and Manufacturing of Small Arms in West Africa, signed in Abuja, Nigeria, on 31 October 1998.

My delegation would like to reiterate its congratulations on similar initiatives taken by countries on the American continent and express its hope that similar actions will be taken in other parts of the world. In the framework of practical disarmament measures, the international community should come to the assistance of countries struggling against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in order to assist in their collection and destruction.

The aspect of training customs officials and public security forces is also very important. Only concerted international action can appreciably curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In this connection, my country welcomes the decision taken by the United Nations, under the terms of resolution 53/77 E of 4 December 1998, to organize in the year 2001 an international conference on this topic. My delegation hopes that attendance at that conference will be at a high level and that the countries of the third world that are the most affected by illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons will be able to participate fully.

Mr. Salander (Sweden): On behalf of some 50 sponsoring delegations and my own delegation, I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.52, on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

My delegation appreciates the cooperation and support of such a great number of sponsoring delegations in the elaboration of this draft resolution. With the permission of the Chair, and for the sake of brevity, I shall refrain from reading out their names.

The 1980 Convention consists of a framework Convention and four annexed Protocols. Protocol I deals with invisible fragments. The revised Protocol II concerns landmines, booby traps and other devices. The subject of Protocol III is incendiary weapons. The last addition is Protocol IV, dealing with blinding laser weapons.

The Convention and its Protocols constitute an essential and integral part of international law applicable to armed conflict. The shocking involvement of civilians in armed conflict is ample reason for us all to intensify our efforts to have the Convention and its Protocols fully implemented. Their purpose is to place constraints on the conduct of war by restricting or prohibiting the use of certain conventional weapons.

When implemented, the rules contained in the Protocols will limit the risks to civilians as well as to combatants. Lives will be saved, and suffering, it is hoped, reduced. We therefore urgently call upon all States that have not yet done so to take all measures to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols as soon as possible.

The Convention offers a framework within which negotiations may gradually refine or expand the areas covered. The last Review Conference, in 1995-1996, provided such an opportunity, and the High Contracting Parties succeeded in strengthening Protocol II, as well as adopting a new Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons. We are very pleased that both these instruments have now entered into force.

The draft resolution before the Committee reflects these positive developments. Under the revised Protocol II, the parties will meet annually to consult and cooperate on all issues related to the operation of the Protocol. The first of these meetings will take place in Geneva on December 15-17 of this year, under Swedish chairmanship. We are looking forward to a fruitful exchange of views during that meeting and encourage the widest possible participation from States parties and States not parties to the Protocol, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross and interested non-governmental organizations.

The draft resolution also addresses the issue of convening the next Review Conference not later than 2001. We hope that Conference will be used to strengthen further the protection against unnecessary suffering that can be offered to those afflicted by armed conflicts.

Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.52 intends to promote the universality of this very important body of international humanitarian law. On behalf of all its sponsors, I should like to express our hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus, as was the case last year.

Mr. Sanders (Netherlands): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to Sweden for introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/54/L.52, on the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, generally known as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

The Netherlands fully supports that draft resolution. In previous years as well, our delegation has spoken in support of the draft resolution submitted by Sweden on conventional weapons, because of the importance the Netherlands attaches to this body of international law, applicable in armed conflict.

The Convention and its Protocols help reduce the suffering of combatants and of civilians in armed conflicts by setting fundamental rules of international humanitarian law that provide for the protection of non-combatants and prohibit the indiscriminate use of weapons. No effort should be spared to advocate the norms of behaviour that have been set by the Convention and its Protocols and to promote universal adherence to them.

It is therefore appropriate for the General Assembly, as proposed in the draft resolution submitted by Sweden, to call upon those States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols as soon as possible.

Earlier this year, the Netherlands gave its consent to be bound by the amended Protocol II, on mines, and by Protocol IV, on blinding laser weapons. My delegation also welcomes the convening of the first annual conference of High Contracting Parties to the amended Protocol II, in December of this year, and supports the setting in motion of the preparatory process for the second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, to be convened no later than 2001. Through these conferences, the international community should further develop and strengthen these legal instruments.

My delegation would also like to call on the parties to the amended Protocol II to ensure timely submission to the first annual conference of their national report on implementation of the Protocol. To facilitate reporting at this stage, the Preparatory Committee of the conference

encouraged parties to make use of the draft reporting format for their national reports. This was distributed by the Preparatory Committee pending adoption of a format by the conference in December.

As recommended by the Preparatory Committee, the European Union member States have decided to use that draft reporting format this year. The Netherlands has already submitted its national report according to this format.

I should like to conclude by expressing the wish that this important draft resolution be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36, entitled "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Colombia, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Fiji, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, the Sudan, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam and my own delegation.

In introducing this draft resolution, allow me to dwell a moment on its historical evolution. The call for security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons must be viewed in the correct perspective. Most importantly, that demand is based on the fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter that States, in their international relations, must refrain from the use or threat of use of force.

That obligation applies to the use or threat of use of force with all kinds of weapons. Had the drafters of the Charter been aware of the existence of nuclear weapons, they would no doubt have specifically included a prohibition of their use. In fact, the General Assembly, in the very first resolution it adopted, affirmed the need to outlaw nuclear weapons. Thus, the fundamental obligation not to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons, being based on the Charter's prohibition of the use or threat of use of force, cannot be conditioned, qualified or restricted in any way.

Unfortunately, this obligation was not expressly and legally affirmed by the first, second or third nuclear-weapon State, and perhaps this was so because the Charter's adoption and the dawn of the nuclear era were soon followed by the outbreak of the cold war.

When the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was being negotiated, the non-nuclear States pointed out that as long as nuclear weapons were possessed by a few and non-nuclear-weapon States were asked not to acquire them, the former should provide credible and binding guarantees that they would not use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons against the latter and, secondly, that they would come to the assistance of any non-nuclear-weapon State which was threatened with nuclear weapons, in accordance with article 51 of the Charter, on individual and collective self-defence.

The response by the nuclear Powers to these reasonable expectations was dismal; in hindsight, this has been the source of much of the nuclear danger that we confront today. Such security guarantees were not written into the NPT, nor into a protocol, as was suggested by some non-nuclear-weapon States. The Conference of Non-Nuclear-Weapon States, convened in Geneva in 1968 at Pakistan's initiative, was prevented by the NPT's main sponsors, present as observers, from reaching a consensus in favour of the demand for unconditional and binding positive and negative security assurances.

The security assurances offered by the three nuclear-weapon States under Security Council resolution 255 (1968) were partial, and ultimately dependent on the unlikely existence of a consensus for action among the Council's permanent members. In 1979, various unilateral statements offering negative security assurances were made by the nuclear Powers. While noting the unilateral statements made by those Powers at the first special session devoted to disarmament, the Final Document called for the conclusion of an international instrument by the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, despite the passage of over 21 years, the Conference on Disarmament has been unable to conclude such an international agreement.

During the cold war, the Conference on Disarmament could not evolve a common formula for the offer of unconditional and credible assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States. Four of the five nuclear-weapon Powers offered only partial and restricted assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. One side excluded any non-nuclear-weapon State which was a member of a military alliance with a nuclear-weapon State. The other side excluded those non-nuclear-weapon States that had nuclear weapons on their territories. All four of those nuclear Powers excluded non-nuclear-weapon States that were not parties to the NPT. Only one nuclear-weapon State — China — offered unconditional and unrestricted assurances to all non-

nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

There was considerable hope that with the end of the cold war, the nuclear-weapon States would be able readily to agree to offer categorical, unconditional and binding negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States. Unfortunately, most of the nuclear-weapon States proceeded in the opposite direction.

First, through means fair and foul, they secured the indefinite extension of the NPT, without offering any tangible assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons or a clear commitment to a definite process of nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons. Security Council resolution 984 (1995) of the Security Council was even more limited in scope and credibility than its predecessor, resolution 255 (1968).

Secondly, soon after the NPT's indefinite extension, some nuclear Powers asserted the right to retain their nuclear weapons indefinitely. They announced new programmes to maintain and improve their nuclear arsenals — for example, through the stockpile stewardship programme.

Next, statements were made reserving the right to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States — even those which are party to the NPT or to nuclear-weapon-free zones — in case those States used or threatened to use other weapons of mass destruction. This represented a significant erosion of even the limited assurances contained in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995).

During the last year, a further erosion took place when the Western alliance announced a new doctrine which envisages the out-of-area use of force. This possibility of nuclear use against non-nuclear-weapon States was further intensified by the expansion of this nuclear alliance and confirmation of arrangements for nuclear sharing with non-nuclear-weapon States members of this alliance.

In parentheses, and speaking for Pakistan, let me add another element. The spread of nuclear weapons to South Asia and elsewhere has added to the possibility of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Within the South Asian region, the danger arises from the imbalance in conventional forces and the existence of outstanding conflicts and disputes, especially the Kashmir dispute.

This danger has been illustrated and heightened by the draft nuclear doctrine announced by our neighbour, which — imbibing the cold-war theology of nuclear deterrence — envisages the operational deployment of a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons on land, on the sea and in the air.

As Pakistan stated in this Committee on 20 October, in the new environment created by South Asia's nuclearization, the Conference on Disarmament's task of evolving an agreed approach on negative security assurances has become more challenging and urgent. We also declared, "We are prepared to extend appropriate assurances, if desired by the regional States, to respect the nuclear-weapon-free status of various nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as in Latin America, Africa and South-East Asia." (*A/C.1/54/PV.12*)

One question that arises is, should the new nuclear Powers in South Asia or elsewhere be required to offer negative security assurances? If this is not politically feasible at present, are there other ways to achieve the same objective — for example, through the concept of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia?

The sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/54/L.36 believe that the Conference on Disarmament has an important and vital task to reverse the progressively negative trends regarding the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The call in draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.36 for effective international arrangements is thus even more urgent and important today than in the past.

The achievement of an unconditional and legally binding commitment by all nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State would have the following positive effects. First, it would reduce the danger of the use of nuclear weapons. Secondly, it could constitute an important confidence-building measure among non-nuclear-weapon States. Thirdly, it would provide greater credibility to attempts to halt nuclear proliferation. Fourthly, it would facilitate the process of nuclear disarmament and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons and thus represent a first step towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The sponsors trust that the Conference on Disarmament will re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances in early 2000 and make rapid progress towards reaching the vital objectives set out in this draft resolution.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I have asked to speak today to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Small arms", contained in document A/C.1/54/L.42, on behalf of the following sponsors: Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, Greece, Guinea, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mexico, Mozambique, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, San Marino, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Zambia and my own country, Japan.

Japan introduced a draft resolution on small arms for the first time in 1995. Since then, the awareness of Member States as well as non-governmental organizations of the problems concerning small arms has grown remarkably. There are now many initiatives being taken and activities being carried out at the international, regional and national levels to tackle the issue of small arms. Japan welcomes such developments and is also pleased to see that the United Nations has actively been engaged in this issue.

In particular, in response to the resolution adopted in 1995, and with the as istance of the Group of Governmental Experts chaired by Ambassador Donowaki, the Secretary-General submitted his first report on small arms to the General Assembly in 1997. This year, as was requested by General Assembly resolution 52/38 J in 1997, he submitted another report (A/54/258) on small arms to the General Assembly. The content of the report has already been introduced by Ambassador Donowaki, on 19 October. The draft resolution this year endorses that report.

The draft resolution also decides that the United Nations conference on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects will be held in June/July 2001 and that a Preparatory Committee will be established. The draft resolution envisages that the Preparatory Committee will conduct the necessary preparatory work in the course of its no fewer than three sessions. The first session of the Preparatory Committee is to be held in New York from 28 February to 3 March 2000.

In view of General Assembly resolution 53/77 E of 1998 and the prospective United Nations conference in 2001, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the feasibility of restricting the manufacture and trade of such weapons to the manufacturers and dealers authorized by States. The draft resolution's sponsors are convinced that this study will be very useful not only for international efforts to prevent and reduce the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and transfer of small arms, but also for the United Nations conference to be held in 2001.

The Chairman returned to the Chair.

I should like to inform the Committee that the sponsors and interested delegations have conducted very intensive consultations on this draft resolution and that the revised version, A/C.1/54/L.42/Rev.1, will appear soon. It is the wish of the its sponsors that the draft resolution receive overwhelming support from the First Committee — if possible, a consensus.

Mr. Westdal (Canada): Canada is pleased to present draft resolutions A/C.1/54/L.11, A/C.1/54/L.29 and A/C.1/54/L.30, under agenda items 68 and 76.

I begin by introducing the draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction", circulated as document A/C.1/54/L.11., on which Canada and Poland have had the pleasure of working together for a number of years.

This draft resolution is familiar to delegations as an updated version of the text that was adopted last year without a vote. The version of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session was itself an updated version of the text that was adopted the previous year — again, without a vote.

During the course of this year's First Committee session, we have consulted widely on the draft text. An open-ended consultation was held on 20 October. We have also met bilaterally with delegations to review various elements of the draft resolution.

All of our contacts have reinforced the merit of maintaining the consensus nature of this important draft resolution. While various ideas have been expressed in favour of specific national viewpoints, all recognized that the text as it is represents a core vision that we all share.

We appreciate the support and cooperation we have received in our efforts once again to put forward a draft resolution which will maintain consensus and keep our consideration of the serious questions involved at the appropriate level — a level which addresses a common vision that we all hope will one day be fully achieved. We present this text for the Committee's consideration in the

belief that, as in previous years, the draft resolution can be adopted without a vote.

Over the past 15 years, Canada has emphasized the role of verification as a central element in the maintenance of international peace and security. The language of draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.29, entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", re-emphasizes the importance of verification to disarmament, arms control and confidence-building. Verification is at the heart of a number of treaties and agreements which have profoundly strengthened our international security. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the bilateral Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty of 1987, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the multilateral Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) of 1990 exemplify the varied but central role verification plays in facilitating arms control.

Experience suggests that verification activities embedded within sanctions and confidence- and security-building measures, while not strictly arms control per se, are playing an increasingly important role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Multilateral and bilateral agreements, decisions of competent international organizations and unilateral commitments all contain elements requiring verification.

In this regard, the relevance of verification methodologies developed within the context of disarmament and arms control is recognized to extend well beyond this issue area. The 1995 United Nations report (A/50/377) "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", explored this theme in considerable detail.

Given today's uncertain international security environment, few issues are of greater significance in international disarmament and arms control negotiations than dependable verification measures. As tensions grow in various regions of the globe, the value of future disarmament and arms control agreements and related obligations will depend on them. As in past years, this draft resolution will serve to remind the international community of this truth and reinforce continuing efforts to maintain and strengthen the international verification regime.

I should also like formally to present draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.30, entitled "The Conference on Disarmament decision (CD/1547) of 11 August 1998 to establish, under item 1 of its agenda entitled 'Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament', an ad hoc committee to negotiate, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices".

Once again this year, I think that this title will be the longest of any draft resolution in the First Committee. Except for some factual adjustments, the draft resolution is identical to resolution 53/77 I of 4 December 1998, adopted without a vote by this Committee and the General Assembly. We all know that this draft resolution has a long, difficult history and that complex negotiations lie ahead. It is not the purpose of this draft resolution to review that history or to prejudge those negotiations or the manner in which they will be carried out. The draft resolution is therefore strictly procedural, anchored firmly in the realities of the Conference on Disarmament and the expectations of the international community.

We are of the view that no amendments should be made to this text; we think attempts to do so would inevitably open up substantive issues better reserved for the Conference on Disarmament itself or, as the case may be, better addressed in other draft resolutions before this Committee.

That said, Canada does consider it highly opportune for the First Committee to restate the importance the international community attaches to the conclusion of a multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, as a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. It is our fervent wish that this consideration on our part will be widely shared in the First Committee and that the draft resolution will be adopted without amendment and without a vote.

Finally, I should like to remind delegations that this draft resolution is open for sponsorship; my colleague Mr. Hébert is in this room with the sponsorship sheet. We welcome all who wish to sign it.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): On behalf of the European Union, I should like to address two draft resolutions in my statement this afternoon: draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.30, just introduced by the representative of Canada, and draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.23, introduced earlier this week by the delegation of Mexico.

It is my honour on behalf of the European Union to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.30. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — namely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta align themselves with this statement.

The European Union has on several occasions stressed the great importance it attaches to the immediate commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty as one of the three measures of the programme of action on nuclear disarmament contained in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) 1995 document on principles and objectives.

In 1993 the General Assembly unanimously recommended initiating negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In 1998 the Conference on Disarmament decided to establish an ad hoc committee for that purpose. The European Union member States joined the other Members of the United Nations in the General Assembly last year in welcoming that decision and encouraging the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the ad hoc committee at the beginning of its 1999 session.

To our deep disappointment, the Conference on Disarmament was not able to respond to the unanimous recommendation of the General Assembly to re-establish the ad hoc committee on a fissile material cut-off treaty in 1999.

How can one explain to the international community, in view of the broad agreement shown in different forums and last year's decision by the Conference on Disarmament, that those negotiations have not continued this year? Pointing to the lack of agreement on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament as a whole is not a satisfactory explanation, as this problem has not impeded important decisions in the past. This situation is a matter of great concern and affects the credibility of the Conference n Disarmament.

The European Union member States will continue to work strenuously towards fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations. The European Union is convinced that such a treaty, by irreversibly limiting the fissile material stockpiles available for use in nuclear weapons and by establishing an effective verification system, will strengthen the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and will constitute a significant internationally agreed step towards the achievement of complete nuclear disarmament.

We should urgently utilize this window of opportunity and ensure that the Conference on Disarmament begins fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations without delay. The General Assembly should send a strong and unambiguous signal to the Conference on Disarmament. The European Union hopes that consultations by the present and incoming Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament will lead to agreement on the commencement of negotiations as soon as the Conference on Disarmament resumes its work in January 2000.

The European Union member States have sponsored draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.30, just introduced by Canada, which addresses the question of fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations in a short and non-confrontational way that found consensus in the General Assembly last year. The European Union calls upon all Member States of the United Nations to demonstrate their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament and once again to adopt without a vote the draft resolution on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as presented in document A/C.1/54/L.30.

Let me now turn to draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.23, which was introduced by the delegation of Mexico on 26 October. It is my honour on behalf of the European Union to speak on this draft resolution. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — namely, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Free Trade Area country member of the European Economic Area (EEA), Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union member States support draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.23 on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) that was introduced by Mexico. The Union is actively pursuing efforts to promote early entry into force of this landmark achievement in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The European Union established a common position towards that end on 29 July 1999.

We welcome the declaration issued at the Vienna Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, which was held from 6 to 8 October 1999 in accordance with article XIV of the Treaty. The Conference

made a strong call to all States that had not yet ratified the Treaty to sign and ratify it without delay.

The European Union hopes that the General Assembly will endorse that call and that determined international efforts to bring the CTBT into force will be continued. The CTBT contributes to both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in line with obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

Since 1995, a lot has happened. The CTBT negotiations were concluded and the Treaty was opened for signature. The Treaty has been signed by the impressive number of 155 countries and ratified by 51 countries. Most European Union member States have ratified the CTBT, including all those member States whose ratification is required for the Treaty to enter into force — including two nuclear-weapon States, the United Kingdom and France.

The work in Vienna to establish the CTBT Organization and a verification system is well under way. These developments give rise to the conclusion that the time of nuclear-test explosions must now be considered over. An end to nuclear-test explosions has been a long-sought goal of the international community.

All the States that have yet to sign or ratify the Treaty should do so as soon as possible, in particular those States that are on the list of 44 States whose ratification is needed for the Treaty's entry into force. We extend the call to the Russian Federation, China and the United States to ratify the CTBT without delay. We also call on the three States that are on the list of 44 States and have not yet signed the Treaty to do so without delay.

The European Union deeply regrets the decision by the United States Senate not to ratify the CTBT. We believe this sends the wrong signal to would-be nuclear proliferators. We welcome the public commitment by President Clinton to continue to work for the ratification of the Treaty, as well as to continue to observe a moratorium on nuclear-test explosions.

The European Union is firmly convinced that the CTBT is strongly in the interest of all States as an essential barrier to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is also an essential element in pursuing nuclear disarmament efforts. The European Union hopes that all United Nations Member States will give their support to this important draft resolution on the CTBT.

Mr. Kuindwa (Kenya): I should like to speak in support of draft resolutions A/C.1/54/L.25, A/C.1/54/L.42 and A/C.1/54/L.44, all relating to small arms.

The illicit flow of small arms, especially in Africa, is an issue of great concern to us. Their destructive and destabilizing consequences are evident throughout the continent. In his report of April 1998 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871), the Secretary-General rightly identified the flow of illicit arms to and in Africa as one of the greatest challenges facing the international community today.

The report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (A/54/258) estimates the number of small arms and light weapons in existence worldwide at more than 500 million. Africa accounts for the largest percentage of these weapons.

The same report underscores the reasons why small arms and light weapons have become the favourite arms in many conflicts. It also points to the significant multiplication of arms manufacturing centres as a cause of concern.

There is an urgent need for us to respond to this situation in a comprehensive manner, as it affects the security, political independence and socio-economic development of African States. We believe it has become increasingly apparent that illicit trafficking in small arms can be stemmed only through concerted international efforts.

It is Kenya's hope that the 2001 conference and the process leading up to it will provide a framework conducive to addressing this very important issue in a comprehensive manner. We believe that for the conference to succeed in its objectives, the widest and most effective participation, especially by affected States, needs to be ensured.

It is also important to recall paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 53/77 E, which requested the Secretary-General to carry out and present in timely fashion a feasibility study on restricting the manufacture and trade of small arms and light weapons to manufacturers and dealers authorized by States. We believe that the study

targets an important aspect of this issue, which should be fully addressed.

As far as regional initiatives are concerned, we encourage sustained support for the mechanisms that have been established through such efforts and hope that the work already carried out will be incorporated into the 2001 conference. In this regard, Kenya is preparing to host a subregional meeting to address the complex problem of small arms and its ramifications for security and conflict in our subregion.

In conclusion, we should like to place on record our appreciation to the authors of the three draft resolutions before us — South Africa, Mali and Japan. We are especially grateful to the delegation of Japan for the patience and commitment it has demonstrated on a subject of direct importance to developing countries in general and Africa in particular.

Ms. King (Australia): It is with great pleasure that Australia joins the 42 other sponsors in putting forward the draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), contained in document A/C.1/54/L.23.

As other sponsors have explained, the draft resolution is very straightforward, but also very necessary. In putting it forward, the sponsors are motivated by the fact that three years after the CTBT was adopted by an overwhelming majority in the General Assembly, it has yet to enter into force. And while the international community has made good progress in this direction, with 155 States having signed the Treaty and 51 States having ratified, there is clearly still some way to go.

Australia, which has ratified this Treaty, has often repeated the call for all States that have not yet signed and ratified it to do so forthwith. Indeed, many others have done the same. But it is important for the General Assembly to reinforce that call. This is what the draft resolution that we have put forward does.

It is uncomplicated and balanced, drawing on the declaration issued at the recent article XIV Conference in Vienna. It focuses on the need for all States to sign and ratify the Treaty and for those which have not signed to refrain from acts which could defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty in the meanwhile.

It is in all our interests to make every effort to ensure this Treaty becomes universal. To that end, we would encourage all nuclear-weapon States that have not ratified the Treaty to do so as a matter of priority. Having been deeply disappointed by the decision of the United States Senate to vote down United States ratification of the Treaty, we would also again urge that country's Administration to continue its efforts to build support for the Treaty with a view to enabling ratification by the United States.

It is also a matter of priority for those States that have not signed the Treaty — and in particular those that have recently demonstrated their capacity to test nuclear weapons — to sign as soon as possible.

This draft resolution also welcomes the contribution by States Signatories to the work of the CTBT Preparatory Commission's efforts to ensure that the Treaty's verification regime will be capable of meeting the verification requirements of the Treaty at entry into force. Given the progress already made on the international monitoring system, we believe this is an important point to make in this draft resolution.

The global monitoring system represents a significant investment by the international community. Indeed, we acknowledge that it requires large capital investment and would generate significant running costs. But without adequate and rigorous verification measures, the CTBT would be a weaker guardian against further nuclear testing.

We need to honour the responsibility, including the financial responsibility, that we willingly shouldered three years ago in adopting the Treaty, in order to ensure that the international verification and monitoring regime is operational and fully effective by the time of its entry into force.

Finally, we would simply express our sincere hope that the General Assembly and this Committee can send an unambiguous message of support for the CTBT by adopting this draft resolution without a vote.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the pleasure to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.12, entitled "Missiles", submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran under agenda item 76, "General and complete disarmament".

The production and testing of missiles as a defensive and offensive arms technology date back many decades, and their effectiveness and role in armed conflicts have convinced military establishments to initiate plans to develop missiles. The dawning of the space age added a new dimension to missiles. In fact, the peaceful application

of outer space technology in ordinary life is becoming increasingly essential, and today any advance in space activity depends on the level of development of missile technology in the country concerned.

This trend appears to be continuing, and States are showing greater enthusiasm and eagerness to enter into the field of missile technology. After all, the legitimate interests of all countries in the peaceful use and exploration of space can by no means be denied.

The continued development of missiles in the military and civil areas will therefore be a reality for years to come. In other words, development of missiles will have security implications at the regional and international levels.

For the time being, no internationally negotiated legal instrument or arrangement exists to cover missiles in the broad context. Recently, States have shown greater interest in discussing various aspects of this question. However, due to the complexity of missile-related matters, no initiative has been taken at the global level, and the partial solutions presented thus far have been recognized and acknowledged as not feasible, practicable, or pragmatic.

A comprehensive study therefore needs to be initiated at the international level to address various aspects of the issue. No prejudgements should be made for such a study. Any attempt to narrow the scope of the study, which at any rate will be only a study at this juncture, would be tantamount to making the study less complete, less comprehensive and partial, and therefore would not contribute to a satisfactory result.

Our first international step should be as comprehensive as possible. This is the main thrust of our draft resolution. We have tried to make the draft resolution rather general. This might be interpreted by some representatives as being vague, but generality is the only way not to be specific, and being specific would in this case prejudge the outcome of the study.

A qualified panel of governmental experts appointed by the Secretary-General on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, and particularly with the participation of Member States which are advanced in the field of missile technology, would be the best forum for initiating such a study, and we request the Secretary-General to provide the first report on the issue.

My delegation sincerely hopes that we will all join our voices together this year to call for the initiation of such a study and adopt this draft resolution without a vote.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): My delegation has asked to speak today to make some observations on the draft resolutions before the First Committee and to indicate the draft documents that the Mongolian delegation intends to co-sponsor in view of the importance we attach to them — namely, documents A/C.1/54/L.23, A/C.1/54/L.9, A/C.1/54/L.18, A/C.1/54/L.30 and A/C.1/54/L.34.

Under the cluster of issues on nuclear weapons, my delegation wishes to make an observation on the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Mongolia strongly believes that the Treaty remains a cornerstone of strategic balance and global stability. It is in our view a fundamental instrument to achieve future reductions in strategic nuclear armaments. The question now is how best to achieve the goal of reduction and ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

While we all have our national concerns and interests, the best way forward is perhaps to look beyond those national priorities and take into account our collective interests. Therefore, we call upon States parties to the ABM Treaty to comply fully with its provisions, pending any future agreement or any other arrangements which may be reached by the parties concerned.

On the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Vienna Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT successfully concluded its work and renewed its determination to work for universalization of the Treaty and its early entry into force. As a State party which was among the very first to sign and ratify the CTBT, Mongolia wishes to join in sponsoring the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/54/L.23, which we consider a follow-up to the Vienna Conference.

On nuclear disarmament, Mongolia is a proponent of the international community's concerted and determined move forward in a non-discriminatory manner and of an all-inclusive approach to realistic and achievable steps towards the ultimate and total elimination of nuclear weapons. We have no quarrel or dispute with anybody as to how best to achieve nuclear disarmament, so long as we persistently move in that direction.

We are therefore more than happy and willing to support any proposal that leads to the attainment of that ultimate goal. From this standpoint, Mongolia intends to

sponsor the draft resolutions entitled "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons", submitted by the delegation of Japan and contained in document A/C.1/54/L.9, the draft resolution entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda", in A/C.1/54/L.18, and draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.30, on the Conference on Disarmament decision of 11 August 1998.

As regards nuclear-weapon-free zones, Mongolia is firmly committed to the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime and, for that matter, to the pursuit, extension and establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones wherever and whenever possible. With a view to making further contributions to the process of globalization of the existing nuclear non-proliferation regime, Mongolia has declared its commitment to its nuclear-weapon-free status and is now moving to institutionalize and formalize that status. To that end, we expect and look forward to the adoption of national legislation by the Mongolian Parliament soon.

From that perspective, we fully support the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba, establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in the three respective regions, and the promotion of the nuclear-weapon-free status of the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas. We will therefore co-sponsor the draft resolution introduced earlier this afternoon by Brazil, contained in document A/C.1/54/L.34.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/54/L.37, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", on behalf of the delegations of Bangladesh, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Fiji, Mexico, Nepal, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine and my own delegation.

While nuclear weapons pose a threat of global annihilation, it is conventional weapons that continue to be used in scores of conflicts affecting various parts of the world. The conventional arms race also consumes the vast majority of the resources expended on armaments by rich and poor nations. After an encouraging decline in outlays on conventional weapons in the immediate aftermath of the cold war, there is now the danger of a revived emphasis on the build-up of conventional armaments and armed forces, for several reasons.

One of these is the unfortunate proliferation of conflicts and wars in various parts of the world. Secondly, there is a growing divergence in the strategic priorities and perceptions of some of the major Powers. A third reason is the ambitions of new, aspiring great Powers. Fourthly, technological progress has made the acquisition of new weapons and modes of warfare feasible and, perhaps, irresistible for the military-industrial complexes in at least some of the most powerful States.

Disarmament in the conventional field will need to be promoted in several ways — by restraints on the qualitative and quantitative development of conventional weapons, by balanced restraint on the transfer and acquisition of such weapons and by the promotion of nuclear disarmament and global agreement for a halt in the arms race between the major Powers.

At the same time, it is obvious that the principal means to address issues relating to conventional weapons are at the regional and subregional levels. This is so because, in the first instance, conflicts and confrontation arise among most States at the regional and subregional levels. This is especially the case now, in the aftermath of the cold war. The resolution of such conflicts and disputes is essential to success in promoting conventional arms control.

Secondly, regional and subregional approaches are also the best way to arrest the emergence of arms imbalances and asymmetries that could destabilize sensitive regions and threaten international peace and security. This can happen if some regional States resort to large-scale acquisition or production of armaments while other States in the region are denied the ability to match such acquisitions. A grave arms imbalance can encourage aggression against weaker States. It can propel the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These concepts are covered by the third, fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/54/L.37.

The sixth preambular paragraph notes with particular interest the initiatives taken in various regions of the world, including Latin America and South Asia. It also recognizes the relevance of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The seventh preambular paragraph reaffirms the accepted principle that militarily significant States with larger military capabilities have a special responsibility in promoting such agreements for regional security.

The eighth preambular paragraph reiterates the central objective of regional and subregional arms control — that

is, to prevent the possibility of military attack launched by surprise.

Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution once again asks for urgent consideration of the issues raised in the draft resolution. Operative paragraph 2 once again requests the Conference on Disarmament to consider the formulation of principles that can serve as a framework for regional agreements on conventional arms control.

The sponsors are disappointed that the Conference on Disarmament has for the past several years not found it possible to respond positively to this recommendation of the General Assembly. The sponsors express the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will initiate consideration of this issue next year and set up an appropriate mechanism to respond to the recommendation in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution in A/C.1/54/L.37.

I express the hope that this draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): The purpose of my delegation's statement is to address the draft resolution entitled "Nuclear disarmament" (A/C.1/54/L.41), introduced by the representative of Myanmar before this Committee today.

My delegation has decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution for the following reasons. First, the draft resolution reaffirms the commitment of the international community to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Secondly, it refers to paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the tenth special session of the General Assembly. Thirdly, it recalls the historic advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, issued on 8 July 1996. Fourthly, it refers to paragraph 114 and other relevant recommendations contained in the Final Document of the Twelfth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Durban, South Africa, from 29 August to 3 September 1998. Fifthly, it emphasizes a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons to establish a world free of nuclear weapons.

For the above reasons, my delegation is convinced that the draft resolution will receive the widest possible support from the members of this Committee.

Organization of work

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with our programme of work and the agreed timetable, the Committee will begin the third stage of its work — action on all draft resolutions under agenda items 64, 65 and 67 to 85 - next Monday morning, 1 November. In order to prepare us for that stage of our work, I wish now to describe the procedure that the Committee will follow in the voting on the draft resolutions. These procedures are set out in rules 123 to 133 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I simply wish to make a few practical observations in this respect, which have a sound legal basis.

First, the procedure for the adoption of draft resolutions consists of just a few steps. At the beginning of each meeting, delegations will have the opportunity to introduce revised draft resolutions, if such exist. I stress the word "revised". Then I shall call on delegations that wish to make general statements or comments, not explanations of vote on the draft resolutions.

Here I wish to digress for a moment to make a request as Chairman of the Committee; it is up to members to accede to this request or not. I simply wish to share this concern: I do not think it would be a good idea, during the process of voting on draft resolutions, for us to engage again in a general debate, as often happens in this Committee. This adds nothing to the content of draft resolutions and changes nothing in countries' positions. I believe that if we could avoid such debates and concentrate more on the voting, we would be acting much more efficiently. This is merely a concern that I wish to share with delegations. Obviously, no one is going to be prevented from making statements or observations of a general nature.

Next, delegations will be able to explain their votes or positions on draft resolutions before a decision is taken. After the Committee has taken a decision, I shall call on delegations that wish to explain their positions or votes on the draft resolution just adopted. That is, delegations will be able to explain their votes before or after the voting, but they should inform the Chair or sign up on the list of speakers in advance.

In accordance with the rules of procedure, the sponsors of a draft resolution cannot make statements in explanation of vote or position; they can make only general statements or observations regarding a new cluster of draft resolutions at the beginning of a meeting. The sponsors of a given draft resolution cannot explain their votes or positions, which seems quite logical.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, I would ask delegations that wish to request a recorded vote to communicate their intention to do so to the Secretariat before the Committee has begun to take decisions on the relevant cluster. We must know about this in advance, even in the case of separate recorded votes on individual paragraphs. Delegations must also inform the Secretariat in advance of the postponement of a decision on a draft resolution. Every effort should be made to avoid the postponement of a decision, but in any case, I ask delegations to inform us in advance of any postponement.

I hope the procedures I have outlined are clear to all delegations.

If no delegation wishes to make on observation in respect of this procedure, we shall consider it adopted.

Thus, on Monday, 1 November, the Committee will begin to take action on all draft resolutions, by cluster, following the order adopted by consensus by the Committee. Postponement of action for convincing reasons will be possible at the request of delegations, or if a draft resolution requires the preparation of a report on its programme budget implications.

I wish to announce that, of the draft resolutions already introduced for the Committee's consideration, those ready for voting are the following: A/C.1/54/L.17, A/C.1/54/L.23, A/C.1/54/L.24, A/C.1/54/L.36 and A/C.1/54/L.43.

In cluster 2, the draft resolutions that are ready for action are A/C.1/54/L.6, A/C.1/54/L.11 and A/C.1/54/L.26.

In cluster 3, draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.22 is ready for action.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) *(spoke in French)*: I should like to draw the attention of the Committee, and of the Chairman, to the fact that consultations are still under way on A/C.1/54/L.17 and that some delegations are not yet ready to pronounce themselves on that draft. For that reason, I am asking the Secretariat to postpone action on that draft resolution.

The Chairman *(spoke in Spanish)*: The Secretariat will take the necessary measures so that no action is taken on draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.17 until everyone is ready, and in keeping with the rules of procedure.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.